

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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R 132111Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4017

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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DIA WASHDC/DS-4C

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0284

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MILL, EC

SUBJ: NEW ORGANIC LAW FOR ARMED FORCES: DESIGNATION OF CHIEF OF
JOINT STAFF

REF: A. QUITO 0140; B. LATIN AMERICA CIRL, MILITARY AFFAIRS,
PG. 46

1. GOE SEC GEN FOR ADMINISTRATION, GENERAL CARLOS AGUIRRE, ANNOUNCED JANUARY 10 THAT AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL JORGE IZURIETA ITURRALDE HAD BEEN DESIGNATED CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF UNDER PROVISIONS OF NEW ORGANIC LAW FOR ARMED FORCES. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, IZURIETA WAS SELECTED FROM A GROUP OF THREE CANDIDATES WHICH ALSO INCLUDED CNO VASQUEZ AND MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT ADMIRAL POVEDA.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT CULMINATED WEEK OF PRESS SPECULATION THAT THERE WAS DISCONTENT WITHIN ARMED FORCES, A RUMOR WHICH HAD ACQUIRED SUFFICIENT STATURE TO REQUIRE OFFICIAL DENIAL THREE TIMES DURING COURSE OF THE WEEK (TWICE BY AGUIRRE AND ONCE BY MINGOV POVEDA).

3. UNDER PROVISIONS OF NEW ORGANIC LAW, COPY NOT YET AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY, IZURIETA WILL NOW VACATE HIS POSITION OF COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE. HIS REPLACE-
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MENT IN THAT POSITION IS SLATED TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS

WEEK. LEADING CANDIDATES ARE REPORTED TO BE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARY GENERAL JOSE MARIA MONTESIMOS, WHO AT DINNER AT DATTS HOME EVENING OF 12 JANUARY DID NOT SEEM THAT HE WOULD GET PART AS HE HAD ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. AIR FORCE INSPECTOR GENERAL GUILLERMO LARA VALENCIA AND ECUADOREAN REPRESENTATIVE TO INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD GENERAL LUIS MOREJON ALMEIDA. LOCAL PAPERS HAVE REPORTED EACH OF THE NAMES AS BEING SELECTED ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS DURING PAST WEEK.

4. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW IF IZURIETA WAS FRONT-RUNNER FOR CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF POSITION ALL ALONG. AS IN CASE OF ANY NEWLY CREATED SLOT OF THIS KIND, THERE WERE BUILT-IN PROSPECTS FOR UNHAPPINESS ON THE PART OF WHOMEVER FELT HE WAS UNJUSTLY DENIED THE POSITION. HAD IZURIETA NOT BEEN SELECTED, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPELLED TO RETIRE UNDER ARMED FORCES SENIORITY RULES. THUS RUMORS OF ARMED FORCES DISCONTENT COULD HAVE REFLECTED AIR FORCE AGITATION TO ENSURE THAT IZURIETA WAS NOT LEFT COMPLETELY BY THE WAYSIDE. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, IZURIETA WAS LEADING CANDIDATE ALL ALONG, REPORTED DISCONTENT COULD REFLECT NAVY UNHAPPINESS OVER BEING PASSED OVER FOR JOINT STAFF POSITION AFTER HAVING LOST KEY POSITION OF GUAYAS MILITARY GOVERNOR TO ARMY OFFICER IN DECEMBER (SEE QUITO 8397 AND GUAYAQUIL 1396).

5. DAO FILES REFLECT SAME DATE OF RANK FOR MONTESIMOS AND JOREJON AND MONTESIMOS TOLD DATT AND AIRA THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO RETIRE EVEN IF HE DOES NOT GET POST AS CHIEF OF FAE. THE CONFIRMATION OF IZURIETA TO THE POSITION HE PREVIOUSLY HELD CERTAINLY CREATED THE LEAST WAVES. ACCORDING TO DAO HIS APPOINTMENT, ALTHOUGH IT DOES RETAIN HIM ON ACTIVE DUTY, IS LIKELY TO BE PRETTY MUCH OF A SINECURE AND MEANS THAT HE HAS LOST COMMAND OF THE AIR FORCE AT A TIME WHEN IT HAS CONCLUDED CONTRACTS TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS EQUIPMENT.
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